



2015 Stellar Communities FAQ

1. Which programs will a community be ineligible to apply for funding during the 3-year SC period?
 - a. IHCD-
 - i. A designated Stellar Community is ineligible to compete in the OOR rounds during the 3-year period since it has access to non-competitive OOR funding (outlined in the chart under question #2 below).
 - ii. A County is eligible to apply for CDBG Owner Occupied Rehab (OOR) through IHCD's competitive OOR rounds, but the application would have to exclude homes inside the jurisdiction boundaries of the designated Stellar Community.
 - b. OCRA-
 - i. Communities will not be eligible to apply to any OCRA grant programs including CDBG, Place Based Investment Fund and Downtown Enhancement Grant during a 3-year period following designation.
 - ii. They will still be eligible for the Community Enhancement and Economic Development loan program and non-grant programs such as Hometown Collaborative Initiative, Community Entrepreneurship Initiative and Community Readiness Initiative.
 - iii. Any new programs created by OCRA will have a determination made of eligibility for Stellar Designees at the time of creation and roll out.
 - c. INDOT-
 - i. Communities that fall outside of any MPO Urbanized Area will not be eligible to apply to INDOT for the Rural Federal Aid Program during a 3-year period following designation.
 - d. SC Partners-
 - i. Designated communities will not be restricted from any other partner agencies' programs.

2. What are the funding amounts available from each partner agency?
 - a. Designated Stellar Communities may be eligible to apply up to the following amounts.
 - b. However, a designated Stellar Community is not guaranteed they will receive the maximum amount available.
 - c. Additional funding sources may be identified by Stellar Communities partners that are not set-aside or identified in the following matrix:

| Program | OCRA | INDOT | IHCDA |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| CDBG | \$1,500,000 | | \$500,000 |
| Rural Federal Aid Program | | \$1,500,000 | |
| HOME Investment Partnerships Program | | | \$500,000 |
| Rental Housing Tax Credits | | | \$1,200,000 |
| Indiana Affordable Housing & Community Development Fund | | | \$500,000 |

3. Are project limits in place for the available funding?
 - a. Except when required by federal regulation, typical per project limits used by the partner agencies will not apply for the Stellar Communities Program.
 - b. OCRA CDBG programs will still be looking at a \$5,000 per beneficiary amount.
4. What is the time frame for project completion?
 - a. All projects including complimentary projects should be expected to be completed within a 3-5 year timeframe after the Stellar Communities designation.
5. Should we identify matching funds from our community in the LOI and SIP?
 - a. Yes, each project should include the local funding from the community along with a gap in funding (if it is known).
6. Should projects included in the LOI and SIP meet the available funding sources?
 - a. Projects included in the LOI and SIP should not be targeted to agency funding programs. Projects should reflect your community needs.
7. Will final design need to be completed for all projects included in the LOI and SIP?
 - a. Final design is not required. It is necessary to include some details in the scope, such as location, estimated number of facades, homes, etc (if available).
8. How will the process for technical assistance be determined for partner agencies?
 - a. Communities are welcome to include projects for agency involvement in their LOI and SIP, but each partner will review projects for opportunities to provide assistance.
9. Do the LOI and/or SIP need to identify projects for every partner agency?
 - a. No, each partner agency does not need to be included in the LOI or SIP.

10. What is the evaluation process?

- a. A committee comprised of representatives from each partner agency will review every LOI in comparison to criteria provided in the Call for Letters of Interest document for eligibility, completeness and quality.
- b. The committee will reach a consensus based on their reviews to select up to three finalists per division.
 - i. All communities not selected as a finalist will be provided a conference call to discuss feedback from their LOI.
- c. The committee will review each finalist's SIP in comparison to criteria provided in the Strategic Investment Plan document for eligibility, completeness and quality.
- d. Committee members will also attend each finalist site visit.
- e. The committee will reach a consensus based on their reviews to select a designee for each division.
 - i. All communities not selected as a designee will be provided an in-person meeting to discuss feedback from their SIP and site visit.

11. Has a study been completed to review the success of past participants in the SC program?

- a. Yes, the Sagamore Institute is working on a study that utilizes a multi-method case study research approach, looking at the efforts of program partners and convening community partner organizations in the designated communities.
- b. The report can be found at <http://www.stellarindiana.org/>.

12. How were the divisions determined?

- a. The two divisions are based on the 2010 Census Population. To determine the appropriate division for a community, please go to <http://www.in.gov/ocra/2601.htm> and choose "2015 Stellar Community Division List."
 - i. The initial analysis compared cities and towns.
 - ii. The two divisions were determined by analyzing trends to determine if certain types of communities might be at a competitive disadvantage.
 - iii. The analysis included 2010 census population, budgeted expenditures, budgeted expenditures per capita, expected revenue and expected revenue per capita.
 - iv. The analysis revealed that of the 47 communities with a population of 6,000 or greater, 21 (45%) had received a planning grant to complete a Stellar Strategic Investment Plan. Out of these 21 communities, 7 were designated as a Stellar Community.
 - v. The 454 communities with a population of less than 6,000 only 5 (1.1%) had received a Stellar Strategic Investment Plan and 1 was designated as a Stellar Community.
 - vi. The analysis concluded that creating two divisions based on 6,000 population was an appropriate method in creating two competitive divisions.